

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW**

CX-AZ-110-2005-0008

PROJECT TITLE: House Rock Valley, GMU 12B, Supplemental Pronghorn Transplant

PROJECT LEAD: Michael Herder, Arizona Strip BLM Wildlife Biologist, and
Rick Langley, AGFD Wildlife Manager

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is to release approximately 40-50 pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) from Utah's Parker Mountain Herd at two locations on BLM public lands in House Rock Valley, GMU 12B in mid-December 2004. The existing pronghorn herd in the House Rock Valley was stable between 100 and 150 animals through the 1990's. Following seven years of drought and low fawn production and survival, the herd has declined to approximately 80 to 90 animals. Fawn to doe and buck to doe ratios are below management guidelines. This transplant would provide added genetic diversity and supplement the existing herd by increasing population numbers.

Pronghorn would be released from transport trailers along existing roads in the vicinity of reliable water sources in House Rock Valley. AGFD Region 2 and Game Branch would provide the necessary transport trailers, drivers, and release personnel. The desired composition would be ~30 bucks : 100 does. Additional releases would be conducted based on the availability of a transplant source, funding, and population parameters.

All pronghorn would be fitted with ear-tags to monitor their movements and identify mortalities of transplanted pronghorn. A winter survey flight would be scheduled in January 2005 to locate and count the transplanted pronghorn to estimate mortality with follow-up flights every 2 months after that until July 2005. Some pronghorn mortality can be expected, but every effort would be expended to minimize the number of mortalities.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed release sites are:

- #1. T. 36 N., R. 4 E., SW ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 12: House Rock Valley south of Highway 89A on the Kane Ranch Allotment at Buffalo Tanks. Approximately 65% of the pronghorn would be released at this location;
- #2. T. 39 N., R. 3 E., NE ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 36: House Rock Valley north of Highway 89A on the House Rock Allotment, where the remaining 35% would be released.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (1992). The proposed action is in conformance with the RMP. Decision WF06 directs BLM to "continue restoration of native wildlife into historic range by transplanting wildlife in cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department."

Decision WF18 directs BLM to "manage pronghorn habitat through the HMP process to

achieve and maintain viable populations in accordance with HMP objectives.” The Game Management Unit 12A/B Pronghorn Management Plan and BLM’s Paria-Kanab Creek HMP guide the management of this population. Both plans direct BLM to conduct augmentations or supplemental transplants when funding and animals are available. The HMP also recommends maintaining the population around 100 animals.

Permittees for the affected allotments have been contacted by Arizona Game and Fish Department and are generally supportive of the proposed action.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action is categorically excluded under 516 DM 6, Appendix 5.4:A.(5): Routine augmentations such as fish stocking, providing no new species are introduced.

The proposal has been reviewed to determine if any of the exceptions described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply. Surname(s) verify completion of this review by appropriate specialists.

NAME	LIST OF EXCLUSION CRITERIA <i>Assign surnames for determination under each below</i>
<u>Herder</u>	1. The proposal would have no adverse effects on public health or safety: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Folks</u>	2. The proposal would not adversely affect unique geographic characteristics such as park, recreation, or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks: <i>Identify the area that would be affected if any</i>
<u>Herron</u>	3. The proposal would have no adverse effects on historic or cultural resources: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Herder</u>	4. The proposal would have no highly controversial environmental effects: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Herder</u>	5. The proposal would have no highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects nor does it involve unique or unknown environmental risks: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Herder</u>	6. The proposal would not establish a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration with potentially significant environmental effects: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Spotts</u>	7. The proposal is not directly related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects: <i>Identify the other actions and their effects if any</i>
<u>Herron</u>	8. The proposal would not adversely affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: <i>Identify the effect if any</i>
<u>Hughes</u>	9. The proposal would not adversely affect a plant species listed or proposed to be listed on the list of endangered and threatened species, nor have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species: <i>Identify the species and effect if any</i>

- Herder 10. The proposal would not adversely affect an animal species listed or proposed to be listed on the list of endangered and threatened species, nor have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species: *Identify the species and effect if any*
- Smith 11. The proposal would not require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) or Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). *Identify the order and effect if any*
- Herder 12. The proposal would not require compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act: *Identify the effect if any*
- Benson 13. The proposal does not threaten to violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment: *Identify the law and effect if any*
- Spotts 14. The proposal is in conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement (January, 1992)

DECISION: We have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposal is in conformance with the approved land use plan, that it would have no significant environmental effects, and that no further environmental analysis is required.

REVIEWED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Environmental Coordinator - Arizona Strip

IT IS MY DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL, AS DESCRIBED.

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Field Manager - Arizona Strip

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Deadline for receipt of responses: 12 noon, Friday 3 December, 2004.

Required Reviews:

Gloria Benson, Native American Coordinator
Tom Folks, Recreation
Laurie Ford, Lands and Minerals Team Lead
Michael Herder, Wildlife Team Lead
John Herron, Cultural
Lee Hughes, T/E Plants
Ray Klein, GCPNM Supervisory Ranger
Linda Price, S&G Team Lead
Robert Sandberg, Range Team Lead
Richard Spotts, Environmental Coordinator
Ron Wadsworth, Supervisory Law Enforcement
Robert Sandberg, Acting Assistant Field Manager for Public Domain and Resources

Discretionary Reviews:

Becky Hammond, Vermillion Cliffs Monument Manager
Ken Shurtz, Safety Officer